

External merchandise trade statistics for March 2019

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (April 29) the external merchandise trade statistics for March 2019. In March 2019, the values of Hong Kong's total exports and imports of goods both recorded year-on-year decreases, at 1.2% and 0.1% respectively.

In March 2019, the value of total exports of goods decreased by 1.2% over a year earlier to \$343.6 billion, after a year-on-year decrease of 6.9% in February 2019. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods decreased by 0.1% over a year earlier to \$402.9 billion in March 2019, after a year-on-year decrease of 3.8% in February 2019. A visible trade deficit of \$59.2 billion, equivalent to 14.7% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in March 2019.

For the first quarter of 2019 as a whole, the value of total exports of goods decreased by 2.4% over the same period in 2018. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods decreased by 3.2%. A visible trade deficit of \$118.7 billion, equivalent to 11.4% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in the first quarter of 2019.

Comparing the first quarter of 2019 with the preceding quarter on a seasonally adjusted basis, the value of total exports of goods decreased by 2.1%. Meanwhile, the value of imports of goods decreased by 2.4%.

Analysis by country/territory

Comparing March 2019 with March 2018, total exports to Asia as a whole went down by 6.0%. In this region, decreases were registered in the values of total exports to some major destinations, in particular India (-11.2%) and the mainland of China (the Mainland) (-10.1%). On the other hand, increases were recorded in the values of total exports to the Philippines (+45.6%), Singapore (+23.8%), Taiwan (+14.6%) and Malaysia (+12.7%).

Apart from destinations in Asia, increases were registered in the values of total exports to some major destinations in other regions, in particular the United Kingdom (+29.4%) and Germany (+15.9%). Concurrently, a decrease was registered in the value of total exports to the USA (-0.3%).

Over the same period of comparison, decreases were registered in the values of imports from some major suppliers, in particular Taiwan (-25.5%), Thailand (-20.7%), India (-14.4%) and Korea (-11.4%). Concurrently, increases were recorded in the values of imports from Switzerland (+22.6%), the USA (+12.4%) and the Mainland (+7.4%).

For the first quarter of 2019 as a whole, year-on-year decreases were registered in the values of total exports to some major destinations, in

particular India (-28.4%), Taiwan (-11.3%), the USA (-8.5%), the Mainland (-6.6%) and Japan (-3.2%). However, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of total exports to Singapore (+17.7%) and the Netherlands (+11.8%).

Over the same period of comparison, year-on-year decreases were registered in the values of imports from most major suppliers, in particular Korea (-23.4%), Taiwan (-16.9%), India (-14.7%), Thailand (-13.6%) and Malaysia (-8.2%). The value of imports from the Mainland also went down by 0.4%. On the other hand, a year-on-year increase was registered in the value of imports from the USA (+5.4%).

Analysis by major commodity

Comparing March 2019 with March 2018, decreases were registered in the values of total exports of some principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$9.2 billion or -6.6%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$5.3 billion or -13.8%) and "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$1.1 billion or -5.6%). However, an increase was registered in the value of total exports of "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$6.1 billion or 10.6%).

Over the same period of comparison, decreases were registered in the values of imports of some principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$8.4 billion or -5.2%) and "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$3.8 billion or -10.6%). However, increases were registered in the values of imports of "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$5.2 billion or 9.3%) and "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$3.0 billion or 12.5%).

For the first quarter of 2019 as a whole, year-on-year decreases were registered in the values of total exports of some principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$14.6 billion or -4.1%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$12.1 billion or -11.6%) and "non-metallic mineral manufactures" (by \$2.2 billion or -4.7%). However, a year-on-year increase was registered in the value of total exports of "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$9.4 billion or 5.8%).

Over the same period of comparison, year-on-year decreases were registered in the values of imports of some principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$31.1 billion or -7.7%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$6.7 billion or -7.4%) and "non-metallic mineral manufactures" (by \$1.9 billion or -3.5%). However, a year-on-year increase was registered in the value of imports of "miscellaneous

manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$3.4 billion or 5.7%).

Commentary

A Government spokesman said that merchandise exports remained subdued in recent months, as the adverse external environment continued to dampen manufacturing and trading activities in the region. The value of merchandise exports fell by 1.2% from a year earlier in March, and by 2.4% for the first quarter as a whole.

The external trading environment will remain challenging in the near term. While reportedly the US-Mainland trade talks have made progress, the global economy, being overshadowed by various uncertainties, has lost some momentum. The Government will remain vigilant.

Further information

Table 1 at the annex presents the analysis of external merchandise trade statistics for March 2019. Table 2 presents the original monthly trade statistics from January 2016 to March 2019, and Table 3 gives the seasonally adjusted series for the same period.

The values of total exports of goods to 10 main destinations for March 2019 are shown in Table 4, whereas the values of imports of goods from 10 main suppliers are given in Table 5.

Tables 6 and 7 show the values of total exports and imports of 10 principal commodity divisions for March 2019.

All the merchandise trade statistics described here are measured at current prices and no account has been taken of changes in prices between the periods of comparison. A separate analysis of the volume and price movements of external merchandise trade for March 2019 will be released in mid-May 2019.

The March 2019 issue of "Hong Kong External Merchandise Trade" contains detailed analysis on the performance of Hong Kong's external merchandise trade in March 2019 and will be available in mid-May 2019. Users can download the publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp230.jsp).

Enquiries on merchandise trade statistics may be directed to the Trade Analysis Section (2) of the C&SD (Tel: 2582 5042).

Implementation of toll-free policy for small passenger vehicles using Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Main Bridge during Labour Day holidays

The Transport Department (TD) announced today (April 29) that according to a notification from the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) Authority, the toll-free policy for small passenger vehicles will be implemented on the HZMB for four consecutive days from 0.00am on May 1 to midnight on May 4. During the period, small passenger vehicles travelling to the Zhuhai or Macao Ports via the Toll Plaza of the HZMB will not be required to pay the toll of RMB150, while the arrangements for small passenger vehicles to pass through the electronic toll lanes (i.e. non-stop) and manual toll lanes (i.e. stop to pay) will remain unchanged. Small passenger vehicles are passenger carrying vehicles with seven seats and less (including the driver's seat), i.e. private cars and hire cars.

The HZMB Main Bridge is located within Mainland waters and the Toll Plaza is also situated in the Mainland. According to the territoriality principle, the HZMB Authority, which is responsible for the operation of the Main Bridge, will implement the Mainland's nationwide toll-free policy on small passenger vehicles during the Labour Day holidays (from May 1 to 4).

The TD spokesman reminded members of the public that if they wish to drive their private cars going to or returning from Zhuhai or Macao, the private car must possess a valid HZMB private car regular quota permit and licences and permits issued by the three governments, or have completed registration for the HZMB Macao Port Park-and-Ride Scheme and obtained a valid permit, including reserving a parking space for the East Car Park of the HZMB Frontier Post at Macao Port.

Hong Kong Customs steps up consumer protection work during Labour Day Golden Week period (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs launched an operation codenamed "Bullet" today (April 29) to step up patrols during the Labour Day Golden Week period at popular shopping spots in various districts and to remind traders to comply with the requirements of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO), with a view to

enhancing consumer protection.

Customs officers starting from today will step up patrols at dried seafood shops, pharmacies and jewellery shops in different tourist shopping areas such as Yau Ma Tei, Tsim Sha Tsui, Mong Kok, Hung Hom, To Kwa Wan, Wan Chai and Causeway Bay. Retailers and staff of the tourist industry will be reminded to comply with the requirements of the TD0.

Customs also reminds consumers that they should have a good understanding of a product's specifications before purchase. They should do price comparisons and purchase products from reputable shops. They are also reminded to check carefully the price and unit of measurement before making payment and to retain the receipt after purchase.

Under the TD0, any trader who adopts unfair trade practices, including making false trade descriptions in relation to goods, misleading omissions, aggressive commercial practices as well as "bait and switch", commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report suspected violations of the TD0 to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



Phishing email related to The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited on phishing email, which has been reported to the HKMA. Hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#) for ease of reference by members of the public.

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information to the email concerned or has conducted any financial transactions through the email should contact the bank concerned using the contact information provided in the press release, and report to the Police or contact the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

Public transport service arrangements for Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port during Labour Day holidays

A spokesman for the Transport Department (TD) announced today (April 29) that as many cross-boundary passengers are expected to travel via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) during the Labour Day holidays, the TD has collaborated with relevant operators to strengthen the local and cross-boundary public transport services of the HZMB Hong Kong Port (HKP) by implementing the following measures in order to meet the festive transport demands.

The HZMB shuttle bus operator will deploy about 190 buses to strengthen the shuttle bus service. Depending on the passenger flow at the ports of the three places, the operator will appropriately deploy the vehicles to cater for the passenger demand during peak periods. Moreover, the provision of pre-booking service for group visitors will continue so as to encourage tour groups to take the shuttle bus service by pre-booking of tickets or chartering a bus. This can help better manage the passenger flow at different time periods of the day and avoid having too many group visitors arriving at and departing from the HKP at the same time. The waiting and queuing facilities for shuttle bus passengers at the HKP, such as separation of

waiting areas and erection of directional signs, have also been further enhanced to efficiently divert the group and individual passenger flow heading to Zhuhai and Macao, and the operator will maintain the boarding and alighting order by providing sufficient staff.

For cross-boundary coach services, an additional ad-hoc quota of 200 has been issued to the existing Guangdong/Hong Kong and Hong Kong/Macao cross-boundary coach operators from today to May 4, increasing the daily trips from 400 to 600 to meet the passenger demand during the holidays. The operators of cross-boundary coach services will also deploy adequate staff at the HKP and major stops in the city proper to keep the queueing and boarding of passengers in order.

For local public transport services, the TD and bus operators will closely monitor the service level of the eight A routes and two B routes of franchised bus services with high patronage at the HKP. Additional departures will operate during the peak periods to cope with the peak demand. For the A routes, bus operators will arrange 12 spare buses at the HKP to operate special departures to the city proper. For the B routes, bus operators will deploy five additional buses to strengthen the services of route nos. B5 and B6. In the meantime, bus operators will arrange for staff at the HKP to maintain the boarding and alighting order. Moreover, the en-route bus stop for New Lantao Bus route no. B6 on Tat Tung Road in Tung Chung (HKP bound) has been relocated to Tung Chung Temporary Bus Terminus since April 27 (Saturday), so as to enhance the passenger waiting environment and minimise the impact on the district.

In order to encourage local coaches to make use of the coach pick-up facilities at the HKP and match the travelling pattern of visitors, the TD has increased timeslots for the morning session for application for picking-up coach passengers at the HKP. The TD has also provided holding areas near the coach pick-up area so that the coaches can wait temporarily at the holding areas before entering the pick-up area, with a view to meeting their operational needs.

The TD will closely monitor the operations of local and cross-boundary transport services at the HKP during the Labour Day holidays and will liaise with the operators to implement appropriate measures to cater for passenger demand when necessary.

Apart from the HZMB HKP, it is expected that the number of cross-boundary passengers at other land boundary control points (such as Lo Wu, Lok Ma Chau and Shenzhen Bay Port) will also increase. The spokesman appeals to travellers to plan their journeys in advance and avoid crossing the boundary at peak periods. When facing busy traffic at the control points, the waiting time for public transport services may be longer than usual and passengers should obey the orders and follow the instructions of the Police and staff of the relevant public transport operators on site.